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HON. EDITOR: G. L. GABITES

A. E. W. S. ARMY HQ WELLINGTON

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## THE OPENING OF THE LIBRARY SCHOOL

18 FEBRUARY 1946

NEW ZEALAND libraries at present are undoubtedly understaffed, and trained reinforcements would be appreciated and advantageously used; they would help to build better library service throughout the country, said Mr G. T. Alley, Director of the National Library Service, in an address to the students of the New Zealand Library School on the first day of the course. The present shortage of librarians was, he thought, part of the general shortage of workers throughout business and industry, and he would like to think that that shortage would soon become quantitative rather than qualitative; the library school would help decide whether New Zealand was to have a good, soundly-trained staff for its libraries, Mr Alley continued. Something had been

done in the last few years to make increased numbers of books available in New Zealand. Needed now were skilled experienced librarians to put that more generous flow of books to its best possible use.

To a newcomer, Wellington was a strange city. It was also a good city. Here, there was an urge to work not found elsewhere; the combination of harbour and hills, sea and sky, the stimulus of meeting people, the many libraries all produced a rare energy for work. Wellington had only one drawback—those who had met the professional landlady would know what he meant.

In the last few years, Mr Alley continued, building activity had been directed towards camp and hospitals, not to libraries and library schools. Miss Parsons and he had tried and kept on trying for proper accommodation for the library school students. As much as possible has been done, but for 1946 they were housed less well, less generously than had been hoped for. However, books and people were more important. They were to have first-class teaching and enough books would be found for the course.

This accomplished ambassador of her country, Mr Alley said introducing Miss M. P. Parsons, the Director of the School, was a notable librarian; she was a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Vienna, she had been resident director of a library school in Paris, she had held responsible positions in Canadian and United States library schools and libraries; already she was well known in New Zealand as Director of the United States Information Library in Wellington. Here was a time when "she was needed and she had occurred." Just how international libraries were could be seen in Miss Parsons.

"This is an important day; I am glad to see you," Mr Alley concluded.

Librarians had long been accustomed to working internationally, Miss Parsons said. Research and even fact-finding could not stop at national frontiers for information that was needed must be found no matter in what part of the world or in what language it existed. Professional librarians had long realised that their work could be improved by international co-operation, of which the International Federation of Library Associations was an example. This was probably the first time, however, that two countries had joined officially in founding a library school.

The school was also a notable example of co-operation within a country. The New Zealand Library Association at its recent national conference passed a resolution giving

first priority to the needs of the library school in 1946. This meant that libraries were being generous in lending books which it was difficult for them to spare and staff whom it was very hard for them to spare. The authorities of the Wellington Public Libraries and the Chief Librarian, Mr Norrie, were making temporary quarters available to the school until finishing touches could be put to the rooms at the National Library Service in which the school would be housed.

Miss Parsons was sure that the staff and students of the school would work together throughout the year in the same co-operative spirit out of which the Library School had grown.

The emphasis of the library school course could best be explained by summarizing the different phases through which libraries had passed in the course of their development. The examples were drawn from the United States, but parallel trends in library development were likely to occur in any country.

It was natural that after forests had been cleared and cities built libraries should be first established with bookish and scholarly people as librarians. They knew the content of their books and possessed the special kind of photographic memory that enabled them to find information without any special order in the arrangement of the books.

Later when more people began to use libraries it became apparent that they must be arranged in such a way that everyone could find books and information. During the second phase of library development useful methods of classification by subject and of cataloguing were developed but unfortunately some librarians tended to forget that method, however good, is only a means toward making libraries useful and not an end in itself. This led to over-elaboration and over-emphasis upon detail which was harmful to libraries because it gave the public the impression that librarianship was a clerical kind of work.

Great librarians of the period, however, like John Cotton Dana, were emphasizing the importance of community service through libraries and an epoch-making report by Dr C. C. Williamson on training for librarianship showed the need for making a clear distinction between professional library work and the routines which could be carried on in libraries by clerical assistants.

It was in this third period, this era of service, in which also the methods of scientific and statistical research had



been applied in studying library problems, that librarians were working to-day.

Miss Parsons said that in the curriculum of the library school the aim would be to take the best from each phase of library development—good scholarship from the first, good and useful methods from the second and from the third the idea of active community service through books.

For the word "community" one might substitute temporarily the word "clientele" for there were many kinds of libraries each with its own clientele. There were school libraries each serving as a centre for the work done by the students and teachers of the school; there were university libraries whose function it was to provide books for the undergraduate students and alumni and specialized research material for graduate students and faculty members who were attempting to advance knowledge through original research. There were the special libraries, most of them concerned with some one subject or group of subjects. Examples were government libraries and libraries of museums, laboratories, learned societies and institutions and of commercial and industrial firms. There were the public libraries in city and country, each serving all the people in its community, people of every age, occupation or interest. In these public libraries trained children's librarians helped to open the minds of the next generation to new ideas at a time when they were most eager to read. There were librarians specially trained to work with young adults, able to win their confidence, to interest them in reading and sometimes even to prevent juvenile delinquency by turning the energy of these young people toward interest in library reading and discussion clubs. These public libraries took their part in adult education too, and in active community leadership through books.

It might be asked whether library school students could learn about so broad a field of professional service in one academic year. The school believed this possible because each student selected for the course had already, through high school and university work, a good general understanding of the various fields of human knowledge and their inter-relationship and also a more thorough knowledge of some field of specialisation. With this background, it should be possible to master within an academic year the basic principles and procedures of professional librarianship which apply, with some variations, to different types of libraries. Students who had come with enthusiasm to the first course at the library school would realise also that after

completing a course they would wish to go on studying professional literature and the subject fields in which they were working.

The whole field of library administration had been divided, for convenience in study and teaching, into three parts. The book course would deal with books, including such things as periodicals, pamphlets, manuscripts, documents, near print, microprint, microfilm, and records. Students would learn about books in action, doing things which were useful and delightful for people who used them for recreation and for information, study or research. The first part of this course would be given by Mr E. H. McCormick.

Work in classification and cataloguing of books, not to be confused in any way with clerical work, would require a broad knowledge of books and of language, good judgment and a sense of logic. Miss A. Minchin would give this course.

The administration course would show how books and people are brought together through the work and the leadership of libraries. This course would be given by Mr Alley and herself, Miss Parsons said, and there would be lectures by visiting librarians.

Although children's library work in public and school libraries was logically a part of the three main courses, it would be given separately by a specialist in the field, Miss K. Harvey.

She was glad, Miss Parsons concluded, that students had come from many parts of New Zealand; the emphasis today was on regional librarianship in which New Zealand was doing outstanding work on a national scale without passing through some of the intermediate steps which had to some extent retarded the development of regional libraries in the United States.

The students of the library school would set the mark for the future; their help and training were badly needed, said Mr Norrie, City Librarian of the Wellington Public Libraries. Librarians would be ready at any time to help students and the library school when difficulties arose so that the important work of training skilled library staff would not be hindered. At the end of the year libraries in every part of New Zealand would be looking to these students for assistance; he knew they would justify the confidence in them held by Miss Parsons and Mr Alley.

If the public were to use books to their greatest advantage there must be order in their presentation, said Miss

Minchin, in a brief outline of the course on classification and cataloguing. Books should be arranged by subject; further, there must be a record of the whole stock for the enquirer to consult. And for the person who may be bewildered by a multitude of books, who may be unable to use a catalogue, there must be members of the staff ready to help. In short, every person doing responsible library work, whether dealing directly with the public or not, needed to know the principles on which the catalogue was built and to be familiar with the system of classification.

With children's libraries there were certain problems, Miss Harvey said. First, critical evaluation of children's books was necessary; second, the stock available must be mobile, it must, for instance be made available for educational and recreational work in the schools. Emphasis on children's books today was on social studies and related subjects, and to keep abreast of the demand it had to be realised ahead what changes were likely to be made in school studies. Attention had to be given, too, to the needs of the adults dealing with children—the teachers and the group leaders.

#### STUDENTS, 1946:

The following students have been admitted to the Library School for the 1946 course:—George A. Albert, B.A., Janet R. Cogan, B.A., Barbara A. Colhoun, Dip. Journ., Patricia M. Deans, B.A., Basil C. Dowling, M.A., Maxine Dunne, B.Sc., Robert Duthie, B.A., Gertrud E. Eichbaum, Ph.D., Janet F. Ferguson, M.A., Mary S. Frankish, B.A. Evelyn A. Franklin, Lynette F. Gardiner, B.A., Lillian D. Gilmour, M.A., Betty C. Glasson, B.A., Dip. Journ., Lionel S. Hart, B.A., Robert C. Lamb, B.A., Hector Macaskill, B.A., Walter J. McEldowney, M.A., Joan I. Moreland, B.Sc., Eva Munz, B.A., Myles O'Connor, M.Sc., Ronald N. O'Reilly, M.A., Joan Paul, M.A., Elaine M. Richards, B.A., John P. Sage, M.A., William Tanzer, M.A., Priscilla Taylor, Shirley D. Thomson, B.A., Catherine R. Tibbles, B.A., Ethena E. Walker, M.A.

#### FACULTY

*Director*, Mary Parsons, A.B., B.L.S., Ph.D., *Senior Lecturer*, Alice Ethel Minchin, B.A., A.B.L.S.; *Bibliographer and Librarian*, Ngarrita Gordon, B.A., Dip. Journ.; *Part-time Lecturers*, G. T. Alley, M.A., Dip. Soc. Sci.; Kathleen Harvey, Certificate, Carnegie Library School, Pittsburgh, Pa.; E. H. McCormick, M.A., M. Litt., Dip. Educ.

Special lectures on library administration, and on community social backgrounds will be given by experts in these fields.